

American Civil War





The American Civil War was a civil war in the United States fought from 1861 to 1865. The Union faced secessionists in eleven Southern states grouped together as the Confederate States of America. The Union won the war, which remains the bloodiest in U.S. history. Among the 34 U.S. states in January 1861, seven Southern slave states individually declared their secession from the U.S. and formed the Confederate States of America. War broke out in April 1861 when they attacked a U.S. fortress, Fort Sumter. The Confederacy grew to include eleven states; it claimed two more states and several western territories. The Confederacy was never diplomatically recognized by any foreign country. The states that remained loyal including border states where slavery was legal, were known as the Union or the North. The war ended with the surrender of all the Confederate armies and the collapse of Confederate government in spring 1865.

Causes of secession



The causes of the Civil War were complex and have been controversial since the war began. James C. Bradford wrote that the issue has been further complicated by historical revisionists, who have tried to offer a variety of reasons for the war. Slavery was the central source of escalating political tension in the 1850s. The Republican Party was determined to prevent any spread of slavery, and many Southern leaders had threatened secession if the Republican candidate, Lincoln, won the 1860 election. After Lincoln won without carrying a single Southern state, many Southern whites felt that disunion had become their only option, because they thought that they were losing representation, which would hamper their ability to promote pro-slavery acts and policies.

Slavery



Contemporary actors, the Union and Confederate leadership and fighting soldiers on both sides believed that slavery caused the Civil War. Union men mainly believed the war was to emancipate the slaves. Confederates fought to protect southern society, and slavery as an integral part of it. From the anti-slavery perspective, the issue was primarily about whether the system of slavery was an anachronistic evil that was incompatible with Republicanism in the United States. The strategy of the anti-slavery forces was containment — to stop the expansion and thus put slavery on a path to gradual extinction. The slave-holding interests in the South denounced this strategy as infringing upon their Constitutional rights. Southern whites believed that the emancipation of slaves would destroy the South's economy because of the alleged laziness of blacks under free labor. Slavery was illegal in the North, having been outlawed in the late 18th and early 19th century. It was fading in the border states and in Southern cities, but was expanding in the highly profitable cotton districts of the South and Southwest. Subsequent writers on the American Civil War looked to several factors explaining the geographic divide, including sectionalism, protectionism, and state's rights.

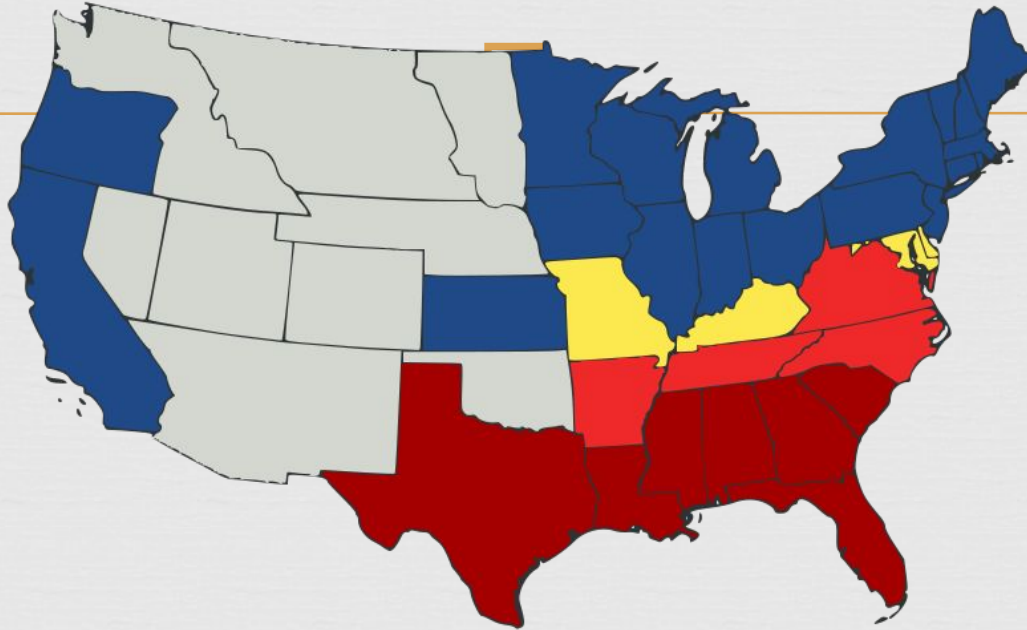
Protectionism



Historically, southern slave-holding states, because of their low cost manual labor, had little perceived need for mechanization, and supported having the right to sell cotton and purchase manufactured goods from any nation. Northern states, which had heavily invested in their still-nascent manufacturing, could not compete with the full-fledged industries of Europe in offering high prices for cotton imported from the South and low prices for manufactured exports in return. Thus, northern manufacturing interests supported tariffs and protectionism while southern planters demanded free trade.



Territorial crisis



Between 1803 and 1854, the United States achieved a vast expansion of territory through purchase, negotiation, and conquest. At first, the new states carved out of these territories entering the union were apportioned equally between slave and free states. It was over territories west of the Mississippi that the proslavery and antislavery forces collided.

Lincoln's election



The election of Abraham Lincoln in November 1860 was the final trigger for secession. Efforts at compromise, including the "Corwin Amendment" and the "Crittenden Compromise", failed. Southern leaders feared that Lincoln would stop the expansion of slavery and put it on a course toward extinction. The slave states, which had already become a minority in the House of Representatives, were now facing a future as a perpetual minority in the Senate and Electoral College against an increasingly powerful North. Before Lincoln took office in March 1861, seven slave states had declared their secession and joined to form the Confederacy.





The Civil War was a contest marked by the ferocity and frequency of battle. Over four years, 237 named battles were fought, as were many more minor actions and skirmishes, which were often characterized by their bitter intensity and high casualties. In his book *The American Civil War*, John Keegan writes that "The American Civil War was to prove one of the most ferocious wars ever fought". Without geographic objectives, the only target for each side was the enemy's soldier.

End of war



The surrender of Confederate army continued until the end of June. The last of the generals CSA Stand Watie surrendered with their Indian units. This happened on 23 June. Some Confederate naval forces also continued to operate after the official surrender. Operate in the Pacific Ocean cruiser CSS «Shenandoah» caused extensive damage to whaling fleet northerners before the captain learned that the war had ended. In the Atlantic, built in France ironclad CSS «Stonewall Jackson» crossed the ocean and arrived in Havana a few days after the war ended. One of the consequences of the war was the death of President Lincoln. April 14, 1865 it made an attempt supporter of Southerners; Lincoln was mortally wounded and, without regaining consciousness, he died the next morning.